

editorial

Petty Panhandler

Some weeks ago, I noticed a chubby, round-faced kid strolling about campus holding a note, asking for money. The note said he was a student in Winnifred Stewart School, but he had been expelled because of bad behavior; he needed some money, and would I please fund him for awhile.

I was always a sucker for a good line and a soft touch; I gave him fifty cents. Apparently, so did a lot of other people, he gets about ten bucks a "working" day for it. He's pretty good at it, too, he's been doing it for a long time.

A thought crossed my mind, "This kid might be a fake, a fraud, just one of the kids from the Elementary School on 109th Street." So I followed him one day to the sixth floor of the Education Building, where I sat down and talked with him while he wrote another note. He's no fraud, but just the same he knows he shouldn't be panhandling on campus, or anywhere.

Unless someone reports him to the police, there's nothing to stop him from walking about fleecing the students at this fine, intellectually-founded institution. I would like to advise against this.

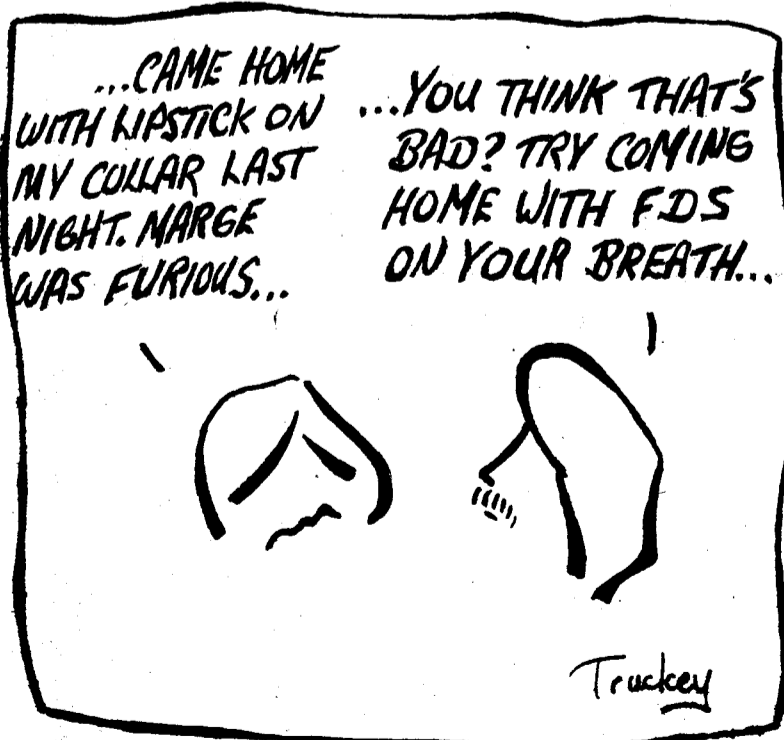
He's been expelled from Winnifred Stewart, as he says, "because I'm bad." Dr. John Mitchell, Professor of Educational Psychology and personal friend to the young opportunist, says this would ruin his chances for re-entry to another institution. He needs help, but jail isn't the place for him to get it.

If you see him around, (you can't miss him, he's the fat kid with a bright orange ski jacket) and you want to help him, DON'T GIVE HIM ANY MONEY.

He deserves better than he's giving himself right now, and he definitely needs help, but your supporting his illegal cause would only worsen his situation. Give him a break, don't ruin his chances in life by turning him in to the legal authorities, but don't perpetrate his present state by supporting it either.

He has a paper route, let him earn his money from that, you'd be doing him the most good by simply ignoring his pleas for money.

Greg Neiman



NUS, ideals in need of activation

The October NUS Conference reaffirmed in us the valid goals that NUS is pursuing. The whole weekend consisted of issues of concern to all Canadian students:

A brief list of the major goals include such things as:

1. Lowering the age of independence regarding student loans to 18;
2. Repayment of Canada Student Loan to begin one year after ceasing to be a student;
3. Inclusion of part-time students under the Canada Student Loan Plan;
4. Reduce students total liability for educational debts through increasing student aid by additional grants - not loans;
5. Canada Student Loan Plan be tied to cost of living index;
6. Reduce regional disparity.

We will give a brief explanation of each of the above goals at Council meeting October 28. To implement a lobbying program to achieve these goals, an accessibility program has been worked out at the campus level, provincial level and national level.

In order to carry out the above proposals, N.U.S. will be running a \$15,000 deficit budget this year. The \$15,000 will take care of one research person, past bills and some administration costs. Presently membership is at \$.30 per student. To overcome the deficit this year the member and observer institutions have agreed to hold "benefits." These benefits would take the form of whatever was most popular on the various campuses, i.e. socials here in Alberta, concerts in Ontario. To rid N.U.S. of its future deficits a motion was passed to increase membership fees to \$1.00 per student. To obtain the increase the member campus' would have to hold a referendum. If the referendum passed it would mean increasing Students' Union fees by \$1.00 which would go straight to N.U.S., therefore no withdrawals from the operating capital of the individual campus concerned.

Our impressions of the goals of N.U.S. were favorable, but the internal involvement by which N.U.S. hopes to achieve these goals needs to be changed.

The internal structure is as follows: member and observer institutions meet twice a year to define and set up goals of N.U.S. Provincial representatives, a treasurer, and two members at large are elected for year terms to a Central Committee.

The Central Committee meets approximately five times a year with the full time staff, which at this point consists of a general secretary, executive secretary and a research person.

This structure is fine but the involvement of the members is the problem. For instance the members will not allow a chairperson to be picked by the central committee. The general meetings become bogged down not with motions, because every member agrees in principle with the motions, but with the wording of the motions. The conferences are heavily bogged down with long winded, nit-picking; union lawyers, political science students, and pie-in-the-sky dreamers.

Examples of lack of participation among members are feeble excuses for not paying dues on time and not responding to N.U.S. communications. We have found also an unwillingness to give the central committee some power and vice-versa, an unwillingness of the central committee to assert a little bit of authority. We feel the member

institutions and the provincial representatives need to interact more thereby giving the central committee a direction.

As a final note, we think the most important one, there needs to be a change in the central committee members. Instead of the idealist who started N.U.S., we need more pragmatists. The ideas are there - let's get something done!

Brian Makin,
VP Executive
Rose Burko,
Agriculture Rep.

Having just read your editorial on N.U.S., I am not pleased to say the least.

The points you raise about the audit and professionalism are valid but there are a few clarifications that should be made. With respect to the audit, we did not have "books" until last year and the first two treasurers we've had were less than professional. To do an audit at the present time would cost an incredible amount of money that would be better spent on more pressing matters. NUS/UNE has recently been incorporated and there will be a yearly audit from this point on.

We are not professionals. We

never purported to be professionals. We have, simply, aspirations to professionalism. This comes with time. We are human and we learn from our mistakes. What is a professional but an experienced person.

We need leadership, you have written, and dammit you're right but where does this leadership come from? We are at present a group of people dedicated to an ideal. We need leaders and we need supporters. Both of these must come from the student membership. It's far too easy to sit and criticize and people opt to do just that. The way to improve something you believe in, is to get into it and fix it from the inside out.

I must also say 'yes' to the personal differences you wrote about. We come from across Canada and differ in many respects i.e. politics, backgrounds, philosophies; but we are dedicated to the idea of a national union of students. If the road is to be a rocky one, so be it; but let us not scrap the ideal over issues that can be corrected.

Yours truly,
S.S. Shugarman
Alberta Representative
NUS/UNE

...or the Grand reality

The situation that presently exists between the U of A students and any other students union in Canada is one that is hard to define. We are not members of the National Union of Students, and as such have no direct link with other campuses. *The Gateway* is not a member of The Canadian University Press, and consequently our newspaper does not report news from other Canadian campuses. When the U of A is compared to other campuses that are members of both, it almost seems that we are practising an isolationist policy, but this is not necessarily the case.

Whereas there are issues of vital importance to students everywhere in Canada, there does not exist a suitable vehicle either to communicate ideas between campuses, or to act on behalf of Canadian students.

The National Union of Students has a misleading name. They represent approximately one quarter of the universities and colleges in Canada, with the only member in Alberta being the University of Lethbridge. NUS is not actively campaigning here, and the vast majority of students are not even aware of their existence, let alone their policies.

If NUS is to represent the Canadian student, why aren't there positive recruitment campaigns designed to attract NAIT, SAIT, Olds, Vermilion, and the rest of the educational institutions in Alberta into the NUS collective voice? Surely they cannot afford to overlook the student population of Alberta.

The National Union of Students is not a viable organization in its present form. Financially, it is projecting a deficit budget that is certain to have serious repercussions from the existing member institutions. If the U of A were to join, it would cost us \$24,000/year. Given our financial situation, this would no doubt create a situation where we would have to cut back existing services in order to pay our NUS fees. I question whether our students are willing to give up services for membership in an organization that virtually does not exist in Alberta.

This is not to say that there is no future for NUS at the U of A. Membership in a national union is desirable, as is communications between all universities. The ideals of our students are not different than those discussed at the last NUS conference. We once were members, and could still join.

The NUS is now in a position to become active here and elsewhere in Alberta. This would involve issuing press releases to all student newspapers to keep both member and non-member institutions up-to-date on activities. It would also involve an accounting of the \$30,000 that has been previously spent by NUS, to prove that the direction NUS has been following is indeed a positive course.

NUS's predecessor, Canadian Union of Students, suffered the same lack of proper business ethics and unless changes are made, the National Union of Students will suffer the fate of CUS.

The investment of a thousand dollars for an audit could well be the difference between seeing the NUS ideals becoming reality, or seeing NUS slowly die.

Bernie Fritze